



The Champion

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What Is Depression?

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Clinical depression is due to a chemical imbalance in which a depressed or sad mood is accompanied by a number of other symptoms. A clinical episode of depression differs from normal sadness in the persistence and severity of symptoms. Depression affects the way you feel, think, relate to people, and function. In some cases, clinical depression can be severe and cause great suffering and difficulty in your life, even taking away your will to live. Suicide is one of the major complications of depressive illness. Depressive disorders also take a toll on family and others close to you.

Depressive disorders are among the most common types of psychiatric illnesses in the U.S. Between 10 and 20 percent of American adults will experience some form of depressive illness during their lifetimes.

Basic Facts about Clinical Depression

- ◆ Clinical depression is one of the most common mental illnesses, affecting more than 19 million Americans each year
- ◆ Depression causes people to lose pleasure from daily life, can complicate other medical conditions, and can even be serious enough to lead to suicide.
- ◆ Depression can occur to anyone, at any age, and to people of any race or ethnic group.
- ◆ Depression is **never** a “normal” part of life, no matter what your age, gender or health situation. Unfortunately, though treatment for depression is almost always successful, fewer than half of those suffering from this illness seeks treatment. Too many people resist treatment because they believe depression isn’t serious, that they can treat it themselves or that it is a personal weakness rather than a serious medical illness.

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Verse of the Month:

Why are you downcast, O my soul? Why so disturbed within me? Put your hope in God, for I will yet praise him, my Savior and my God.

Psalm 42:5-6

Did You Know Depression Is Treatable?

Esther Bird, MA, LPC, LMFT, LCDC

Clinical depression is not just a feeling. It is always a cluster of symptoms, including, but not limited to, the following:

- * **Mood changes** (sadness, intense irritability, feeling easily frustrated)
- * **Low self-esteem**, feelings of worthlessness, lack of self-confidence
- * **Extremely negative thinking**, including pessimism, thoughts of hopelessness
- * **Thoughts about suicide**, a bleak view of the future, brooding, worrying, fretting
- * **Loss of interest** in most life activities; a profound lack of vitality
- * **Marked changes in physical functioning**: sleep, energy, sex drive, appetite

If you have five or more of these symptoms for two weeks or more, you could have clinical depression and should see your doctor or a qualified mental health professional for help.

Clinical depression lasts a long time. A typical bout of major depression, if not treated, will last from nine to fifteen months. Most depressions can be very successfully treated. Treatment involves getting psychotherapy and antidepressant medication (if appropriate), learning about depression, getting support from family members, developing an attitude of compassion for yourself and adopting an action-oriented strategy.

- **Weekly evaluation** of depressive symptoms to track improvement
- **Four steps to improve your sleep** 1) Tally your daily caffeine intake. 2) Keep daily caffeine intake under 150 mg. 3) Gradually reduce daily caffeine intake to avoid withdrawal symptoms 4) If 150mg produces symptoms, eliminate caffeine.
- **Exercise** (10 to 20 minutes of walking daily) completed at least three hours before bedtime.

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UNDERSTANDING DEPRESSION

FREE WORKSHOP

Thursday, October 9

6 – 7 PM

CALL (281) 357- 4111

Limited Space

Clinical Depression continued from p. 1

Treatments for Clinical Depression

Clinical depression is *very treatable*, with more than 80% of those who seek treatment showing improvement. The most commonly used treatments are antidepressant medication, psychotherapy or a combination of the two. The choice of treatment depends on the pattern, severity, persistence of depressive symptoms and the history of the illness. As with many illnesses, early treatment is more effective and helps prevent the likelihood of serious recurrences. Depression must be treated by a qualified mental health professional.

**FREE
DEPRESSION SCREENING
Thursday, October 9, 2003
10 A.M. – 2 P.M.
AT Tomball College**

YOU CAN BEAT YOUR DEPRESSION!

Sally Etheredge, LPC

Depression is **not** shameful. It haunts many people of all ages. Individuals with different types of depression can benefit from different types of treatment. For some people, taking certain medications prescribed by a doctor can return their sleep to normal levels, reduce their anxiety and help them spend less time on the negatives in their lives. With some people depression can be a state of exhaustion in which they become physically as well as psychologically exhausted. Depression does not respect status, race, intelligence or **religion**. Don't think that because you're a "good Christian" you can't have this illness. It can strike **anyone** at any time.

Scripture and Prayer

"Out of the depths have I cried unto thee, O Lord" (Ps. 130:1)

Prayer: Out of the depths have I cried unto you, O Lord God. Let your ears be attentive to my prayer. My soul waits for you, and in your Word I do hope.

I come to you, Father God, in the wonderful name of my Lord Jesus Christ and I confess the depression that I'm experiencing to you. By so doing, I am expressing my earnest desire to forsake it and to put it behind me forever. Thank you for lifting me from the miry clay of depression and setting my feet upon the solid confidence of your Word. Lord God, you are my glory, and the lifter of my head. As I cry unto you I know you are hearing me out of your holy hill.

Restore unto me the joy of your salvation. In your joy I find my strength...."

(Excerpt from *A Breakthrough Prayer for a Woman Who Feels Depressed* on p. 93 in *Breakthrough Prayers for Women*) by Clift and Kathleen Richards

Depression is Treatable continued from p. 1

- **Lowering the lights and reducing loud noises** at least two hours before bedtime.
- **Select calm evening entertainment** like relaxing music or non-exciting TV.
- **Five steps to reduce racing thoughts** 1) Shift eyes from right to left and back to right 2) Repeat the back-and-forth movement about twenty times. Stop, close your eyes and relax. 3) Scan through your body and notice any tension or discomfort 4) Repeat step one; take a calming, deep breath, and then begin the back-and-forth movements. When finished, close your eyes and relax. A few seconds later do it again, a third time. 5) Do the eye movements as you get into bed at night, repeating them two or three times. Some people find that they can eventually achieve the same results by doing the eye movements even with their eyes closed.
- **Progressive Muscle Relaxation:** Close your eyes and take two deep breaths. Tense and relax the muscles in the following body parts: feet/toes, calves/lower legs, thighs, buttocks, abdomen, lower back, chest, hands, upper arms, shoulders, neck, and face.
- **Challenge negative thinking** and untwist your distorted thoughts
- **Keep a gratitude journal** and/or a positive activity diary to minimize pessimism
- **Use positive affirmations**, accept compliments, avoid minimizing, and reframe
- **Raise your self-esteem** by developing an inner language of self-support

(Summarized from: *Lift Your Mood Now: Simple Things You Can Do to Beat the Blues* By John D. Preston, Psy.D)

Characteristics of Low Self-Esteem

- ✓ Feels and acts like a "victim"
- ✓ Judgmental of self and others
- ✓ Breaks agreements, violates own standards
- ✓ Exaggerates, pretends, lies
- ✓ Blames others, critical of others, condemns others
- ✓ Leaves tasks and relationships unfinished
- ✓ Doesn't accept or give compliments
- ✓ Displays compulsive and self-destructive behaviors
- ✓ Vulnerable to opinion, comments, attitudes of others
- ✓ Lacks purpose in life
- ✓ Jealous/envious of others

Characteristics of High Self-Esteem

- ✓ Takes appropriate risks
- ✓ Takes responsibility for life and consequences of actions
- ✓ Accepting of self and others
- ✓ Shows tenacity and persistence
- ✓ Faces and moves through fears
- ✓ Has life purpose and commitments
- ✓ Sees opportunities instead of problems
- ✓ Can appropriately ask for help